

Cresset Lexington LLC  
120 Water Street 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02109

December 22, 2021

Lexington Planning Board

**Re: 475 Bedford Street  
Planned Development District PD-7  
Preliminary Site Development and Use Plan (PSDUP)  
Response to Planning Board and Public Comments on Sketch Plan**

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

Cresset Lexington LLC has submitted a Preliminary Site Development and Use Plan (PSDUP) along with supporting materials in conjunction with our proposal to create a Planned Development District PD-7 for 475 Bedford Street, pursuant to Section 7.3 of the Lexington Zoning Bylaw and Section 8.0 of the Planning Board Zoning Regulations.

We appreciate all of the constructive commentary received to date and we look forward to a continued collaborative effort with the Planning Board, Town Staff, and community members as we continue to advance the design of the project.

This memo serves as a response to the comments received by the Planning Board, Town Staff, and members of the public on the previously proposed sketch plan that was submitted on October 19<sup>th</sup> and presented before the Planning Board on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and November 10<sup>th</sup>.

The comments below have been numbered for ease of reference.

**Comments from Planning Board Decision Dated 11/10/2021**

1. The Project should incorporate and be designed to meet the expectations of the Planning Board found in § 176 – 12.0 Site Plan Review and Special Permit Design Regulations.
  - When preparing the Project, please use the checklists prepared for § 176 – 12.0 Site Plan Review and Special Permit Design Regulations as the project is further designed. The checklists were designed to guide developers and reduce review time.

**Response:** The project will be designed to meet the expectations of the Planning Board as defined in § 176 – 12.0 Site Plan Review and Special Permit Design Regulations.

2. At their October 25, 2021 meeting, the Conservation Commission asked for a 25-foot buffer from the wetlands, including the replicated wetlands.



**Response:** The proposed site design significantly restores the 25' buffer and reduces the impervious area within the 25' buffer from 22,340 SF (Existing) to 7,022 SF (proposed). As part of the 25' buffer restoration, 27 existing parking spaces are to be removed from this buffer area. Additionally, in response to the Conservation Commissions specific request to create a 25' buffer at the proposed replication area, we have coordinated with the Conservation Director, Lexington Fire, the Interim Planning Director, and the Economic Development Director to reconfigure emergency access to the structured parking garage to allow for installation of a 25' buffer adjacent to the proposed replication area. The updated site design was presented to the Conservation Commission at an informal meeting on 12/20/2021 and has been incorporated into the PSDUP submission.

3. The Department of Public Works (DPW) recommends incorporating easements across the property's frontage to accommodate future roadway expansion and complete streets plans for Bedford Street. The Applicant understands and is aware of future efforts by the Town to improve Bedford Street, and the Applicant should incorporate such improvements into the design of the Project.

**Response:** We will work with the Town to incorporate easements across the frontage of the property to accommodate future roadway expansion and modifications contemplated under the complete streets plan effort that is in process. The proposed sidewalk bordering the entrance of the site and along Bedford St. has been located such that it can be expanded in the future to accommodate a multi-modal path or larger sidewalk if requested by the Town.

4. The Project should be designed to ensure adequate fire and public safety access and site circulation while being mindful of natural and wetland features.

**Response:** At the Development Review Team meetings for the project on 5/5/2021 and 10/27/2021 we discussed the specific requirements for emergency access with the fire department and understand that Lexington fire follows the requirements of 527 CMR 1.00 the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code that governs emergency access requirements for structures. We met with officials from Lexington Fire, Conservation, and Planning on 11/22/2021 to finalize the proposed plan for emergency access and all parties were in agreement on the approach. The agreed upon design is now depicted on the site construction plan C 2.00 in the regulatory plan submission. The proposed emergency access is in compliance with 527 CMR 1.00. A vehicle circulation plan for fire truck circulation is included on page C5.1 in the non-regulatory plan submission.

5. The Applicant should submit sewer usage projections, water usage projections, and downstream capacity analysis to determine if adequate capacity exists.

**Response:** VHB has met with engineering staff to discuss the existing conditions and requirements and has included the requested projections and capacity analysis in the supporting documentation included in the PSDUP submission.

6. The site access and egress should be evaluated and designed to ensure left turns leaving or entering the property are prohibited.



**Response:** Cresset proposes a redesign of the Site entry to better reinforce left-turn exit restrictions while also meaningfully enhancing pedestrian accommodation to meet the Town objective of “complete streets” design along the Bedford Street corridor. Historically the driveway has accommodated left-turn ingress travelling east along Bedford Street, estimated at approximately 25 vehicles hourly during peak hours. The proposed redevelopment is not expected to generate any material change in this left-turn entry volume and may in fact reduce the volume from historic levels (despite the relatively low volume) during the weekday evening and weekend periods relative to the prior athletic club use. We further note that the driveway has historically experienced well below average crash rates. Please refer to the complete TIAS included as part of the PSDUP submission. Cresset understands that the Town is considering design options for Bedford Street that may physically preclude left-turns through use of medians for instance, supported by longer-term improvements at nearby intersections to accommodate such turns. Until these longer-term improvements are implemented by the Town, the 475 Bedford Street driveway design contemplates the continued practice of allowing low-volume left-turns into the property from Bedford Street so as to avoid potential secondary impacts to local streets such as Eldred Street to reverse direction to access the property.

7. The Applicant should include the intersection of Winter Street and Bedford Street in the traffic analysis for the PSDUP submittal

**Response:** At the request of the Drummer Boy Condominium Association as well as Town staff, the Winter Street intersection was included in the final PSDUP TIAS.

8. A turn diagram for both tractor-trailer trucks and fire trucks (swept path analysis) should be submitted for review

**Response:** A truck turning analysis for fire trucks and delivery vehicles including SU-30's, SU-40's, WB-40's, and WB-50's has been included on pages C-5.1 – C-5.3 of the non-regulatory plan submission. The surface parking lot has also been designed to allow for a WB-50 to turn around without having to access the loading dock if deemed necessary – refer to sheet C-5.4 of the non-regulatory plan submission depicting this turning movement.

9. The Applicant should work with Lexington Greenways Committee to help create or improve trail connections within the area.

**Response:** We are in receipt of a letter from Keith Ohmart, Chair of the Lexington Greenways Corridor Committee dated August 27, 2021. We would be happy to work with the Committee to help facilitate improvements to the existing trail network within the area and will coordinate with the Town of Lexington in preparing a public access easement to facilitate trail connectivity.

10. The applicant should provide access to the Simond's Brook trail system. Because of wetlands, the access must remain in the uplands on the northeastern corner.

**Response:** We have proposed to maintain the existing connection to the trail system and will enhance the connection in collaboration with the Conservation Commission and the Greenways



Committee. We have also created 4 surface parking spaces adjacent to the existing trailhead that will be reserved for members of the public to utilize for access to the trail system. We will coordinate with the Town to develop an easement for the public to access the trail system and utilize the parking onsite.

11. The Applicant should make best efforts to decrease or repurpose off-street parking spaces that are not necessary. The Applicant may consider park and ride opportunities to encourage public transportation. The Applicant is encouraged to remove one floor from the parking garage.

**Response:** In response to commentary from both Planning Board and members of the public, we have reduced the overall size of the parking garage. Generally, we have reduced the height of the parking garage from 55' to 44' by re-configuring the layout and reducing the overall parking capacity. Per a Planning Board Member's suggestion, we investigated and incorporated a design change that results in having a half level of parking below grade to reduce the overall height of the garage while maintaining the necessary parking capacity. The northeast corner of the garage that is nearest the Drummer Boy complex has been reduced to 33' (approximately the height of the existing tennis building) to mitigate concerns about potential views of the garage from their property. In order to make this change, we had to relocate the entry point to the garage from the east side to the south side along the loading access roadway. Additionally, as noted in prior presentations to the Drummer Boy residents and Planning Board, the proposed garage is located approximately 100' further away from the Drummer Boy property than the existing tennis building.

The proposed parking count for the site in the sketch plan was 617 spaces of which 450 were in the garage and 167 were on the surface. After reducing the size of the garage, the parking count is now at 343 spaces and there are 174 surface spaces (there are 240 existing surface parking spaces) for a total parking count of 517. The revised parking count ends up resulting in a ratio of roughly 2.5 spaces per 1,000 SF of lab/office area which is within the range of what other lab buildings are offering in the market but is on the low end of that range. We are confident that we can be successful with this parking count by employing robust PTDM strategies as defined in the TIAS included in the PSDUP filing.

#### **Comments from the public:**

1. Noise – Members of the public raised concerns about noise from the proposed lab building associated primarily with loading activities and mechanical equipment.

**Response:** Given the concerns expressed by members of the public and more specifically residents from the Drummer Boy community, Cresset has engaged with Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (CTA) to perform a complete acoustical analysis for the proposed project. Existing ambient noise levels were monitored in two locations onsite (one along the Drummer Boy property line and one near the Armory property line) for a period of 1 week per industry standard. CTA is now building out a model of the proposed building generated noise associated with both loading activities and building mechanicals to determine what sound mitigation



measures will be necessary to meet or exceed the requirements outlined in the Mass DEP policy regarding noise levels as well as the Lexington Zoning Bylaw regarding noise generated from new developments. This level of analysis is typically carried out during Site Plan Review however, Cresset acknowledges the heightened sensitivity the residential abutters have to potential noise impacts, so we have agreed to advance this effort now to address their concerns.

Regarding loading activities, Cresset performed a preliminary market survey of expected delivery/pickup trips for a project of this size and have determined that approximately 3-4 delivery related trips per day are expected. Additionally, the typical delivery vehicles will be able to navigate the loading dock in a single turning movement which will limit the amount of time the vehicle spends backing up which can be a source of noise. The turning movements for all anticipated delivery vehicles are depicted on pages C 5.1 – C 5.4 in the non-regulatory plan submission. Additionally, we have reduced the number of proposed loading bays from 4 to 3 bays in response to concerns from the Drummer Boy community about loading activities. Cresset also agrees to restrict delivery times to 8am – 6pm Monday – Friday.

2. Lighting – Members of the public raised concerns about light being emitted from the lab building during the evening and nighttime hours.

**Response:** The proposed site and exterior building lighting will comply with dark sky requirements and the Lexington Zoning Bylaw. Additionally, to mitigate concerns from Drummer Boy residents, Cresset has agreed to install automated shades on the side of the building facing Drummer Boy Way (west building elevation) that will automatically drop at dusk to reduce any light transmission from the building.

3. Traffic – Members of the public raised concerns about the existing traffic conditions on the Bedford St./ Hartwell Ave corridor and are concerned about any potential adverse impacts the project may have on the current traffic conditions. Drummer Boy Residents also requested that Winter St. be studied as part of the TIAS which as agreed to by Cresset and MDM.

**Response:** Included in this PSDUP submission is a complete Traffic Impact Analysis Study for the proposed project. As noted in the sketch plan traffic study as well as the complete TIAS, the proposed increase in trip generation of the proposed project relative to the existing health club use is not considered a material increase to the existing traffic volume along Bedford St. We acknowledge that members of the public have concerns with the existing traffic volumes along the Bedford St. corridor however, the proposed project is not anticipated to contribute any measurable increases to the existing traffic volume. We have committed to implementing robust PTDM measures outlined in the TIAS which will help to further reduce the anticipated daily traffic volume to and from the site.

We are also excited about the prospect of proposed improvements to the Bedford St./Hartwell Ave corridor that will make it more bicycle friendly so that more building users will be encouraged to bike to work instead of driving. The proposed project will have both exterior and



interior bike storage with showers, bike maintenance stations, access to shared bikes, and locker facilities.

4. Use – Members of the public raised concerns about the type of lab user(s) that may occupy the building and the potential harmful emissions and associated impacts those emissions may have on the surrounding community.

**Response:** All tenants will be restricted to Bio Safety levels 1 & 2 per the Lexington Regulations. The users we expect to occupy the building will be performing similar research and development activities to the users that are currently occupying properties on Hartwell Ave and in other parts of Lexington such as Thermo Fisher Scientific, Fractyl (treatments for type 2 diabetes), TIAX (functional wearables and coatings), and Brammer Biologic (cell and gene therapy) for example.

As is typical for all new lab/ R&D facilities, detailed modeling of the proposed exhaust system will be performed to ensure that the system is designed to mitigate any potential negative impacts to the public and to confirm compliance with any Mass DEP or Lexington health regulations. It is not anticipated that any permits for this project related to laboratory exhaust would be required as the emissions from the proposed uses will fall well below the threshold triggering any permits through the Mass DEP.

5. Screening – Drummer Boy Residents expressed concerns about garage users being able to see into the Drummer Boy pool area.

**Response:** The existing tree buffer between the project site and the Drummer Boy property will block any views from the parking garage to the Drummer Boy pool area and vice versa during the months that the pool is in operation. Regardless of that fact, Cresset has agreed to install opaque environmental graphic screening on the sides of the garage facing the Drummer Boy pool area to prohibit any garage users from being able to see out to the pool area.

6. Sustainability

**Response:** Cresset is aware of the passage of Article 17 at the Fall Town Meeting and it's requirements related to lab building design within the CM Zoning District. Despite the requirements of Article 17 not applying to our proposed Planned Development District, we agree to comply with the requirements of Article 17 and will provide a hybrid heating system that provides the first 5 BTU of heat via an electric source heating system before transitioning to a combustion source heating system for the heating load in excess of 5 BTU. There are other mechanical systems that help to significantly reduce the overall building energy consumption that Cresset is also considering as part of the building design in addition to the hybrid heating system. The project will be designed to meet a minimum of LEED Silver Certification.



Additionally, we agree to provision for the parking garage to be “solar ready” however, we would like to hold off on installing a solar array until solar panel efficiency is advanced to a point where the installation can more significantly offset the energy usage for the project. We look forward to engaging with Sustainable Lexington to discuss the proposed project in greater detail.

7. Lab Building Massing/Height – One member of the planning board and some members of the public expressed concerns about the overall density and height of the proposed lab building.

**Response:** Cresset along with our architect, SGA have carefully studied the proposed building massing and height relative the surrounding environment. There is an existing tree buffer between our site and the Drummer Boy property that serves as a natural view buffer of our proposed project from the Drummer Boy Property. Cresset hired a certified arborist to evaluate the condition of the existing tree buffer and the arborist determined that the trees are generally in good health and can be expected to live for several decades with both current and ongoing annual maintenance. A copy of the arborists report is attached as exhibit 1. In coordination with the Drummer Boy Residents, Cresset has prepared proposed views of the project from certain vantage points on the Drummer Boy property which were shown at the Planning Board presentation on 11/3/2021.

Additionally, as you will see in the elevations submitted with the PSDUP filing, we have advanced the exterior façade design considerably from the sketch plan submission and have taken into account the commentary received about breaking up the massing by way of architectural expression. In order to mitigate the perceived height of the project, we have set back the 5<sup>th</sup> floor to reduce its presence and have proposed a façade with punched windows in lieu of more predominant curtain wall on the side of the building facing the Drummer Boy to mitigate potential light impacts and privacy concerns. We have carefully studied and designed the ground level experience on the southeast corner of the building adjacent to the entry point to the property to provide for an active and welcoming area for both the community and future building users. The retail uses will be carefully selected to help reinforce the idea of creating a destination for the abutting residential and commercial communities.

We look forward to presenting our PSDUP submission and updated design concepts to the Planning Board and members of the public in the coming months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E. Nardi", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Edward G. Nardi  
Manager  
Cresset Lexington LLC





**BRANSFIELD**  
Tree Company LLC

EXHIBIT 1

Cresset Group  
re: 475 Bedford St Lexington Ma  
Tree Work Proposal 11/29/21  
Acastraberti@Cressetgroup.com

## 475 Bedford St Lexington. Pine Hedge Assessment



### **Regarding the Boundary Area Between Drummer Boy Way and 475 Bedford Rd Worksite:**

There is a row of 35 White Pines (approximately 20-30" d.b.h.) indicated in area "A" and 1 smaller individual White Pine "B". Of the 36 trees, 2 are dead and one is storm damaged to the point of being a hazard tree and should be removed. The remaining Pines are in a general state of good health without any obvious disease or pests issues present. Most are structurally imperfect, however—they are most all multiple-stemmed instead of single-stemmed. Multi-stem growth form in White Pines is a very common failure point for that species—it is the most common storm damaged tree in recent decades. This structural vulnerability can be readily remedied through the installation of multiple interior cables and a crown reduction pruning. The reduction pruning will serve the dual purpose of mitigating storm forces on the trees as well as preserving the higher value low level screening foliage. White Pines are well known to grow their upper crowns at the expense of lower foliage; crown reduction pruning is the method deployed to prevent this undesirable outcome, maintaining them as a screening hedge.

White Pine "B" is younger than the rest of the row and is also in good health growing at an approximate rate of 18-24" per year. It is also a multi-stem growth form, and would benefit from cables, but is not of a size to warrant crown reduction pruning.



### **Other Issues Facing these Trees:**

Bittersweet vines have started climbing up the trees from the 475 Bedford Rd. This is a host killing invasive weed species that grows exceptionally rapidly. I recommend cutting the vines to the ground and treating the stumps with an EPA / MassDEP wetland approved systemic herbicide to prevent their immediate regeneration.

A layer of black plastic was installed over the root zones of the pine trees some years ago. Total removal of the plastic is not necessary; perforating it in situ will suffice to ensure that water penetration is improved.

### **Improving the Screening Quality of the Hedge:**

After all the necessary tree work and invasive management is complete, new evergreen trees should be installed in the midst of the Pines. I recommend Western Red Cedars (*Thuja Plicata*) due to their ability to grow in sun and shade, resist deer browse, and the absence of pests and diseases. 20-30 trees at 10-12' tall would make a significant and immediate impact on the site.

### **Future Care**

Continued care is recommended for the existing tall White Pines to preserve them and their screening function. Ongoing care would consist of annual inspections by a qualified arborist with field reports. Repeat pruning of the tops to limit storm damage potential and preserve low screening limbs from being shaded out by overgrown tops should be undertaken every 5 years.